



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

m-f
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/524,349	02/11/2005	Gunter Richter	SC-04PCT	4637
40570	7590	09/12/2006		EXAMINER
				BERRY, WILLIE WENDELL JR
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
				3643

DATE MAILED: 09/12/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/524,349	GUNTER RICHTER	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Willie W. Berry, Jr.	3643	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 February 2005.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) Claim(s) 1-9 is/are rejected.
7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ .
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 2/11/05. 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) Other: ____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by patent no. 6,276,090 to Lai.

In regards to claim 1, Lai discloses a plastic container (not numbered, but see cross hatchings in fig. 4) for collecting rainwater, which has an underside (not numbered, but see fig. 4) that rests on the ground, a cavity (H1) for collecting the rainwater, and an upper side, wherein the essentially closed upper side has the shape of a trough (20), which is designed as a bearing surface, wherein the underside has a recess (11), whose sidewall (10, 20) extends up to the trough and supports it.

In regards to claim 2, Lai discloses a container in accordance with claim 1, wherein the upper region of the trough has an overflow hole (not numbered, but shown at the rim of the pot next to H1 in fig. 4) to the cavity.

In regards to claim 3, Lai discloses a container in accordance with claim 1, wherein a closable opening (25, 26) is located between the cavity and the lower region of the trough.

In regards to claim 4, Lai discloses a container in accordance with claim 1, wherein a filling hole (not numbered, but shown at the rim of the pot next to H1 in fig. 4) for filling the cavity with rainwater and taphole (not numbered, but shown at the rim of the pot next to H1 in fig. 4) for removing rainwater from the cavity are provided.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lai.

Lai discloses as discussed above.

Lai does not disclose the specific process used to make the container.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Lai to include the blow molding process used to make the container, since it has been held that the process of forming an article only involves routine skill in the art. *Howard v. Detroit Stove Works*, 150 U.S. 164 (1893).

Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lai.

Lai discloses as discussed above.

Lai does not disclose the plastic material being polyethylene.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Lai to include the polyethylene plastic material,

since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. *In re Leshin*, 125 USPQ 416. See also *Ballas Liquidating Co. v. Allied industries of Kansas, Inc.* (DC Kans) 205 USPQ 331.

Claims 7 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lai.

Lai discloses as discussed above.

Lai does not disclose the specific use of the trough as a garden pond, flower bed or rock garden.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Lai to include the specific trough use as a garden pond, flower bed or rock garden, since it has been held that a recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus satisfying the claimed structural limitations. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1647 (1987).

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lai.

Lai discloses as discussed above.

Lai does not disclose the specific size of the cavity.

It would have been an obvious matter of design choice to have modified Lai to include the 3,000 liter cavity, since such a modification would have involved a mere change in the size of a component. A change in size is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art. *In re Rose*, 105 USPQ 237 (CCPA 1955).

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Willie W. Berry, Jr. whose telephone number is (571) 272-8974. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:00am to 5:30pm Mon. - Fri..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Peter Poon can be reached on (571) 272-6891. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Wbj.

wbj


PETER M. POON
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER